

OXC-3482

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14 MAY 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : OXCART Cover Story

REFERENCE : Memo to DD/R frm Exec. Dir., dtd 8 May 62,
(Action Memorandum No. A-2)

1. This memorandum is for information only.

2. A considerable amount of research work has been done with NASA, FAA and DOD since the beginning of the OXCART program in reference to a cover story. The sum and substance of these efforts culminated in an OXCART cover story that explained the governing body for the program to be a committee of the above organizations who each contributed sums of money for the program. It was felt that this type of arrangement would be the only plausible explanation for the sums of money that were required to be covertly spent. Since the contracting and funding of the OXCART program had been accomplished through black channels, the ostensible purpose of the committee was to conduct research in the supersonic transport field. After a more careful examination of the above story, it was realized that too many people would have to be telling the same story at the same time and that once this explaining scenario got out of phase that embarrassment would undoubtedly come to all members concerned.

3. It was, therefore, recommended that a simple "no comment" type cover story would be adopted adhering to the principle that the less said the better. All persons concurred in this approach; however, they all realized that a fall-back position would have to be available. Therefore, the classified research work on an Air Force interceptor-type aircraft would be the explanation. This is the present cover story.

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4. The actual flight of the aircraft caused everyone again to look at the cover story, and it was soon apparent that the Air Force interceptor story had apparent loopholes. Basically, it was determined that the following issues have to be clearly explained:

a. Why is the work being conducted in area? This is unusual since all Air Force testing of new aircraft is accomplished at Edwards Air Force Base, California. EO 12958 3.3(b)

b. What is the source of funds for the project?

c. What were the reasons for such tight security?

d. Why was C. L. Johnson of Lockheed Aircraft Corporation selected above other competitors (sole source procurement)?

5. Taking the above prerequisites to a cover story, we are now looking into the following cover proposal. The OXCART vehicle is part of a satellite launch system that is being tested for future satellite programs. This particular tack explains the above cover prerequisites in the following way.

a. Since it is in the satellite field, it does not necessarily follow that the testing would have to be done at Edwards Air Force Base.

b. The Defense Department can explain that the money was spent for procurement of aircraft through a classified mechanism for security reasons and in the national interest.

c. The reason for the tight security is that this conforms with the present DOD policy of restricting information concerning satellite programs.

d. Lockheed Aircraft Corporation's unique experience in advanced aircraft (F-104) and space/satellite field makes Lockheed especially qualified to do the job of developing a multi-purpose advanced aircraft with particular capability as a recoverable booster for a satellite launch system. In addition, Mr. C. L.

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Johnson is the most experienced hand in "skunk work" type operations. This includes direct control and command from the top (Mr. Johnson) to the working personnel as well as a direct line to project headquarters. It also provides the security, expedite action, minimum cost and personnel management required for this type program.

6. In addition to the above, this places the program under the jurisdiction of the Under Secretary of the Air Force (NRO).

7. The suggestions concerning surfacing and describing the OXCART aircraft as a new type interceptor or bomber with characteristics slightly above those of the B-58 would have the following drawbacks with (a) the B-70 bomber program development, (b) the cancellation of the F-108 interceptor programs, and (c) the availability of the successful F-4H, Phantom II (F-110) supersonic interceptor aircraft. It would be difficult to convince the technical press of an aircraft program with but a slight improvement in performance above the B-58 program. As mentioned before, military type aircraft would normally be tested at Edwards Air Force Base. To change this pattern would call attention to the program.


HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.

Deputy Director
(Research)

EO 12958 6.2(c)

cc: DDCI (Cy 2)

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